

REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT
BY THE
US COMMISSION ON CIA
ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE
UNITED STATES

"ROCKEFELLER COMMISSION"

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Chapter 1

The Fundamental Issues

In announcing the formation of this Commission, the President noted that an effective intelligence and counterintelligence capability is essential to provide "the safeguards that protect our national interest and help avert armed conflicts."

While it is vital that security requirements be met, the President continued, it is equally important that intelligence activities be conducted without "impairing our democratic institutions and fundamental freedoms."

The Commission's assessment of the CIA's activities within the United States reflects the members' deep concern for both individual rights and national security.

A. Individual Rights

The Bill of Rights in the Constitution protects individual liberties against encroachment by government. Many statutes and the common law also reflect this protection.

The First Amendment protects the freedoms of speech and of the press, the right of the people to assemble peaceably, and the right to petition the government for redress of grievances. It has been construed to protect freedom of peaceable political association. In addition, the Fourth Amendment declares:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated

In accordance with the objectives enunciated in these and other Constitutional amendments, the Supreme Court has outlined the following basic Constitutional doctrines:

1. Any intrusive investigation of an American citizen by the government must have a sufficient basis to warrant the invasion caused by the particular investigative practices which are utilized;

2. Government monitoring of a citizen's political activities requires even greater justification;

3. The scope of any resulting intrusion on personal privacy must not exceed the degree reasonably believed necessary;

4. With certain exceptions, the scope of which are not sharply defined, these conditions must be met, at least for significant investigative intrusions, to the satisfaction of an uninvolved governmental body such as a court.

These Constitutional standards give content to an accepted principle of our society—the right of each person to a high degree of individual privacy.

In recognition of this right, President Truman and the Congress—in enacting the law creating the CIA in 1947—included a clause providing that the CIA should have no police, subpoena, law-enforcement powers or internal security functions.

Since then, Congress has further outlined citizen rights in statutes limiting electronic surveillance and granting individuals access to certain information in government files,¹ underscoring the general concern of Congress and the Executive Branch in this area.

B. Government Must Obey the Law

The individual liberties of American citizens depend on government observance of the law.

Under our form of Constitutional government, authority can be exercised only if it has been properly delegated to a particular department or agency by the Constitution or Congress.

Most delegations come from Congress; some are implied from the allocation of responsibility to the President. Wherever the basic authority resides, however, it is fundamental in our scheme of Constitutional government that agencies—including the CIA—shall exercise only those powers properly assigned to them by Congress or the President.

Whenever the activities of a government agency exceed its authority, individual liberty may be impaired.

C. National Security

Individual liberties likewise depend on maintaining public order at home and in protecting the country against infiltration from abroad

and armed attack. Ensuring domestic tranquility and providing for a common defense are not only Constitutional goals but necessary preconditions for a free, democratic system. The process of orderly and lawful change is the essence of democracy. Violent change, or forcing a change of government by the stealthy action of "enemies, foreign or domestic," is contrary to our Constitutional system.

The government has both the right and the obligation within Constitutional limits to use its available power to protect the people and their established form of government. Nevertheless, the mere invocation of the "national security" does not grant unlimited power to the government. The degree of the danger and the type of action contemplated to meet that danger require careful evaluation, to ensure that the danger is sufficient to justify the action and that fundamental rights are respected.

D. Resolving the Issues

Individual freedoms and privacy are fundamental in our society. Constitutional government must be maintained. An effective and efficient intelligence system is necessary; and to be effective, many of its activities must be conducted in secrecy.

Satisfying these objectives presents considerable opportunity for conflict. The vigorous pursuit of intelligence by certain methods can lead to invasions of individual rights. The preservation of the United States requires an effective intelligence capability, but the preservation of individual liberties within the United States requires limitations or restrictions on gathering of intelligence. The drawing of reasonable lines—where legitimate intelligence needs end and erosion of Constitutional government begins—is difficult.

In seeking to draw such lines, we have been guided in the first instance by the commands of the Constitution as they have been interpreted by the Supreme Court, the laws as written by Congress, the values we believe are reflected in the democratic process, and the faith we have in a free society. We have also sought to be fully cognizant of the needs of national security, the requirements of a strong national defense against external aggression and internal subversion, and the duty of the government to protect its citizens.

In the final analysis, public safety and individual liberty sustain each other.

¹ Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (18 U.S.C. Secs. 2510-20) and Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. Sec. 552a).

Chapter 2

The Need for Intelligence

During the period of the Commission's inquiry, there have been public allegations that a democracy does not need an intelligence apparatus. The Commission does not share this view. Intelligence is information gathered for policymakers in government which illuminates the range of choices available to them and enables them to exercise judgment. Good intelligence will not necessarily lead to wise policy choices. But without sound intelligence, national policy decisions and actions cannot effectively respond to actual conditions and reflect the best national interest or adequately protect our national security.

Intelligence gathering involves collecting information about other countries' military capabilities, subversive activities, economic conditions, political developments, scientific and technological progress, and social activities and conditions. The raw information must be evaluated to determine its reliability and relevance, and must then be analyzed. The final products—called "finished intelligence"—are distributed to the President and the political, military and other governmental leaders according to their needs.

Intelligence gathering has changed rapidly and radically since the advent of the CIA in 1947.¹ The increased complexity of international political, economic, and military arrangements, the increased destructiveness of the weapons of modern warfare, and the advent of electronic methods of surveillance have altered and enlarged the needs for sophisticated intelligence. Intelligence agencies have had to rely more and more on scientific and technological developments to help meet these needs.

Despite the increasing complexity and significance of intelligence in national policymaking, it is also important to understand its limits. Not all information is reliable, even when the most highly refined

¹ The CIA is only one of several foreign intelligence agencies in the federal government. Others include the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the intelligence branches of the three military services and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

intelligence methods are used to collect it. Nor can any intelligence estimates of another country's intentions or future capacities be accurate or will not be outrun by unforeseen events. There are limits to accurate forecasting, and the use of deception by our adversaries or the penetration of our intelligence services increases the possibility that intelligence predictions may prove to be wrong. Nevertheless, informed decision-making is impossible without an intelligence system adequately protected from penetration.

Therefore, a vital part of any intelligence service is an effective counterintelligence program, directed toward protecting our own intelligence system and ascertaining the activities of foreign intelligence services, such as espionage, sabotage, and subversion, and toward minimizing or counteracting the effectiveness of these activities.

Foreign Invasions of United States Privacy

This Commission is devoted to analyzing the domestic activities of the CIA in the interest of protecting the privacy and security rights of American citizens. But we cannot ignore the invasion of the privacy and security rights of Americans by foreign countries or their agents. This is the other side of the coin—and it merits attention here in the interest of perspective.

Witnesses with responsibilities for counterintelligence have told the Commission that the United States remains the principal intelligence target of the communist bloc.

The communists invest large sums of money, personnel and sophisticated technology in collecting information—within the United States—on our military capabilities, our weapons systems, our defense structure and our social divisions. The communists seek to penetrate our intelligence services, to compromise our law enforcement agencies and to recruit as their agents United States citizens holding sensitive government and industry jobs. In addition, it is a common practice in communist bloc countries to inspect and open mail coming from or going to the United States.

In an open society such as ours, the intelligence opportunities for our adversaries are immeasurably greater than they are for us in their closed societies. Our society must remain an open one, with our traditional freedoms unimpaired. But when the intelligence activities of other countries are flourishing in the free environment we afford them, it is all the more essential that the foreign intelligence activities of the CIA and our other intelligence agencies, as well as the domestic counterintelligence activities of the FBI, be given the support neces-

sary to protect our national security and to shield the privacy and rights of American citizens from foreign intrusion.

The Commission has received estimates that communist bloc intelligence forces currently number well over 500,000 worldwide.

The number of communist government officials in the United States has tripled since 1960, and is still increasing. Nearly 2,000 of them are now in this country—and a significant percentage of them have been identified as members of intelligence or security agencies. Conservative estimates for the number of unidentified intelligence officers among the remaining officials raise the level to over 40 percent.

In addition to sending increasing numbers of their citizens to this country openly, many of whom have been trained in espionage, communist bloc countries also place considerable emphasis on the training, provision of false identification and dispatching of "illegal" agents—that is, operatives for whom an alias identity has been systematically developed which enables them to live in the United States as American citizens or resident aliens without our knowledge of their true origins.

While making large-scale use of human intelligence sources, the communist countries also appear to have developed electronic collection of intelligence to an extraordinary degree of technology and sophistication for use in the United States and elsewhere throughout the world, and we believe that these countries can monitor and record thousands of private telephone conversations. Americans have a right to be uneasy if not seriously disturbed at the real possibility that their personal and business activities which they discuss freely over the telephone could be recorded and analyzed by agents of foreign powers.

This raises the real specter that selected American users of telephones are potentially subject to blackmail that can seriously affect their actions, or even lead in some cases to recruitment as espionage agents.

Chapter 3

Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

As directed by the President, the Commission has investigated the role and authority of the CIA, the adequacy of the internal controls and external supervision of the Agency, and its significant domestic activities that raise questions of compliance with the limits on its statutory authority. This chapter summarizes the findings and conclusions of the Commission and sets forth its recommendations.

A. Summary of Charges and Findings

The initial public charges were that the CIA's domestic activities had involved:

1. Large-scale spying on American citizens in the United States by the CIA, whose responsibility is foreign intelligence.
2. Keeping dossiers on large numbers of American citizens.
3. Aiming these activities at Americans who have expressed their disagreement with various government policies.

These initial charges were subsequently supplemented by others including allegations that the CIA:

- Had intercepted and opened personal mail in the United States for 20 years;
- Had infiltrated domestic dissident groups and otherwise intervened in domestic politics;
- Had engaged in illegal wiretaps and break-ins; and,
- Had improperly assisted other government agencies.

In addition, assertions have been made ostensibly linking the CIA to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

It became clear from the public reaction to these charges that the secrecy in which the Agency necessarily operates, combined with the allegations of wrongdoing, had contributed to widespread public misunderstanding of the Agency's actual practices.

A detailed analysis of the facts has confirmed the Commission that the great majority of the CIA's domestic activities comply with its statutory authority.

Nevertheless, over the 28 years of its history, the CIA has engaged in some activities that should be criticized and not permitted to happen again—both in light of the limits imposed on the Agency by law and as a matter of public policy.

Some of these activities were initiated or ordered by Presidents, either directly or indirectly.

Some of them fall within the doubtful area between responsibilities delegated to the CIA by Congress and the National Security Council on the one hand and activities specifically prohibited to the Agency on the other.

Some of them were plainly unlawful and constituted improper invasions upon the rights of Americans.

The Agency's own recent actions, undertaken for the most part in 1973 and 1974, have gone far to terminate the activities upon which this investigation has focused. The recommendations of the Commission are designed to clarify areas of doubt concerning the Agency's authority, to strengthen the Agency's structure, and to guard against recurrences of these improprieties.

B. The CIA's Role and Authority (Chapters 4-6)

Findings

The Central Intelligence Agency was established by the National Security Act of 1947 as the nation's first comprehensive peacetime foreign intelligence service. The objective was to provide the President with coordinated intelligence, which the country lacked prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The Director of Central Intelligence reports directly to the President. The CIA receives its policy direction and guidance from the National Security Council, composed of the President, the Vice President, and the Secretaries of State and Defense.

The statute directs the CIA to correlate, evaluate, and disseminate intelligence obtained from United States intelligence agencies, and to perform such other functions related to intelligence as the National Security Council directs. Recognizing that the CIA would be dealing with sensitive, secret materials, Congress made the Director of Central Intelligence responsible for protecting intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure.

At the same time, Congress sought to assure the American public

that it was not establishing a secret police which would threaten the civil liberties of Americans. It specifically forbade the CIA from exercising "police, subpoena, or law-enforcement powers or internal security functions." The CIA was not to replace the Federal Bureau of Investigation in conducting domestic activities to investigate crime or internal subversion.

Although Congress contemplated that the focus of the CIA would be on foreign intelligence, it understood that some of its activities would be conducted within the United States. The CIA necessarily maintains its headquarters here, procures logistical support, recruits and trains employees, tests equipment, and conducts other domestic activities in support of its foreign intelligence mission. It makes necessary investigations in the United States to maintain the security of its facilities and personnel.

Additionally, it has been understood from the beginning that the CIA is permitted to collect foreign intelligence—that is, information concerning foreign capabilities, intentions, and activities—from American citizens within this country by overt means.

Determining the legal propriety of domestic activities of the CIA requires the application of the law to the particular facts involved. This task involves consideration of more than the National Security Act and the directives of the National Security Council; Constitutional and other statutory provisions also circumscribe the domestic activities of the CIA. Among the applicable Constitutional provisions are the First Amendment, protecting freedom of speech, of the press, and of peaceable assembly; and the Fourth Amendment, prohibiting unreasonable searches and seizures. Among the statutory provisions are those which limit such activities as electronic eavesdropping and interception of the mails.

The precise scope of many of these statutory and Constitutional provisions is not easily stated. The National Security Act in particular was drafted in broad terms in order to provide flexibility for the CIA to adapt to changing intelligence needs. Such critical phrases as "internal security functions" are left undefined. The meaning of the Director's responsibility to protect intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure has also been a subject of uncertainty.

The word "foreign" appears nowhere in the statutory grant of authority, though it has always been understood that the CIA's mission is limited to matters related to foreign intelligence. This apparent statutory ambiguity, although not posing problems in practice, has troubled members of the public who read the statute without having the benefit of the legislative history and the instructions to the CIA from the National Security Council.

The evidence within the scope of this inquiry does not indicate that fundamental rewriting of the National Security Act is either necessary or appropriate.

The evidence does demonstrate the need for some statutory and administrative clarification of the role and function of the Agency.

Ambiguities have been partially responsible for some, though not all, of the Agency's deviations within the United States from its assigned mission. In some cases, reasonable persons will differ as to the lawfulness of the activity; in others, the absence of clear guidelines as to its authority deprived the Agency of a means of resisting pressures to engage in activities which now appear to us improper.

Greater public awareness of the limits of the CIA's domestic authority would do much to reassure the American people.

The requisite clarification can best be accomplished (a) through a specific amendment clarifying the National Security Act provision which delineates the permissible scope of CIA activities, as set forth in Recommendation 1, and (b) through issuance of an Executive Order further limiting domestic activities of the CIA, as set forth in Recommendation 2.

Recommendation (1)

Section 403 of the National Security Act of 1947 should be amended in the form set forth in Appendix VI to this Report. These amendments, in summary, would:

a. Make explicit that the CIA's activities must be related to foreign intelligence.

b. Clarify the responsibility of the CIA to protect intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure. (The Agency would be responsible for protecting against unauthorized disclosures within the CIA, and it would be responsible for providing guidance and technical assistance to other agency and department heads in protecting against unauthorized disclosures within their own agencies and departments.)

c. Confirm publicly the CIA's existing authority to collect foreign intelligence from willing sources within the United States, and, except as specified by the President in a published Executive Order,¹ prohibit the CIA from collection of

¹ The Executive Order authorized by this statute should recognize that when the collection of foreign intelligence from persons who are not United States citizens results in the incidental acquisition of information from unknowing citizens, the Agency should be permitted to make appropriate use or disposition of such information. Such collection activities must be directed at foreign intelligence sources, and the involvement of American citizens must be incidental.

Recommendation (2)

The President should by Executive Order prohibit the CIA from the collection of information about the domestic activities of United States citizens (whether by overt or covert means), the evaluation, correlation, and dissemination of analyses or reports about such activities, and the storage of such information, with exceptions for the following categories of persons or activities:

a. Persons presently or formerly affiliated, or being considered for affiliation, with the CIA, directly or indirectly, or others who require clearance by the CIA to receive classified information;

b. Persons or activities that pose a clear threat to CIA facilities or personnel, provided that proper coordination with the FBI is accomplished;

c. Persons suspected of espionage or other illegal activities relating to foreign intelligence, provided that proper coordination with the FBI is accomplished.

d. Information which is received incidental to appropriate CIA activities may be transmitted to an agency with appropriate jurisdiction, including law enforcement agencies.

Collection of information from normal library sources such as newspapers, books, magazines and other such documents is not to be affected by this order.

Information currently being maintained which is inconsistent with the order should be destroyed at the conclusion of the current congressional investigations or as soon thereafter as permitted by law.

The CIA should periodically screen its files and eliminate all material inconsistent with the order.

The order should be issued after consultation with the National Security Council, the Attorney General, and the Director of Central Intelligence. Any modification of the order would be permitted only through published amendments.

C. Supervision and Control of the CIA

1. External Controls (Chapter 7)

Findings

The CIA is subject to supervision and control by various executive agencies and by the Congress.

Congress has established special subcommittees to review the CIA and its secret budget within four small subcommittees.² Historically, these subcommittees have been composed of members of Congress with many other demands on their time. The CIA has not as a general rule received detailed scrutiny by the Congress.

The principal bodies within the Executive Branch performing a supervisory or control function are the National Security Council, which gives the CIA its policy direction and control; the Office of Management and Budget, which reviews the CIA's budget in much the same fashion as it reviews budgets of other government agencies; and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which is composed of distinguished citizens, serving part time in a general advisory function for the President on the quality of the gathering and interpretation of intelligence.

None of these agencies has the specific responsibility of overseeing the CIA to determine whether its activities are proper.

The Department of Justice also exercises an oversight role, through its power to initiate prosecutions for criminal misconduct. For a period of over 20 years, however, an agreement existed between the Department of Justice and the CIA providing that the Agency was to investigate allegations of crimes by CIA employees or agents which involved Government money or property or might involve operational security. If, following the investigation, the Agency determined that there was no reasonable basis to believe a crime had been committed, or that operational security aspects precluded prosecution, the case was not referred to the Department of Justice.

The Commission has found nothing to indicate that the CIA abused the function given it by the agreement. The agreement, however, involved the Agency directly in forbidden law enforcement activities, and represented an abdication by the Department of Justice of its statutory responsibilities.

Conclusions

Some improvement in the congressional oversight system would be helpful. The problem of providing adequate oversight and control while maintaining essential security is not easily resolved. Several knowledgeable witnesses pointed to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy as an appropriate model for congressional oversight of the Agency. That Committee has had an excellent record of providing effective oversight while avoiding breaches of security in a highly sensitive area.

² Subcommittees of the Appropriations Committees and the Armed Services Committees of the two houses.

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One of the underlying causes of the problems confronting the CIA arises out of the pervading atmosphere of secrecy in which its activities have been conducted in the past. One aspect of this has been the secrecy of the budget.

A new body is needed to provide oversight of the Agency within the Executive Branch. Because of the need to preserve security, the CIA is not subject to the usual constraints of audit, judicial review, publicity or open congressional budget review and oversight. Consequently, its operations require additional external control. The authority assigned the job of supervising the CIA must be given sufficient power and significance to assure the public of effective supervision.

The situation whereby the Agency determined whether its own employees would be prosecuted must not be permitted to recur.

Recommendation (3)

The President should recommend to Congress the establishment of a Joint Committee on Intelligence to assume the oversight role currently played by the Armed Services Committees.³

Recommendation (4)

Congress should give careful consideration to the question whether the budget of the CIA should not, at least to some extent, be made public, particularly in view of the provisions of Article I, Section 9, Clause 7 of the Constitution.⁴

Recommendation (5)

a. The functions of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board should be expanded to include oversight of the CIA. This expanded oversight board should be composed of distinguished citizens with varying backgrounds and experience. It should be headed by a full-time chairman and should have a full-time staff appropriate to its role. Its functions related to the CIA should include:

1. Assessing compliance by the CIA with its statutory authority.
2. Assessing the quality of foreign intelligence collection.
3. Assessing the quality of foreign intelligence estimates.
4. Assessing the quality of the organization of the CIA.
5. Assessing the quality of the management of the CIA.
6. Making recommendations with respect to the above subjects to the President and the Director of Central Intelligence, and, where appropriate, the Attorney General.

³ See statement by Commissioner Griswold, Chapter 7.

⁴ "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time."

b. The Board should have access to all information in the CIA. It should be authorized to audit and investigate CIA expenditures and activities on its own initiative.

c. The Inspector General of the CIA should be authorized to report directly to the Board, after having notified the Director of Central Intelligence, in cases he deems appropriate.

Recommendation (6)

The Department of Justice and the CIA should establish written guidelines for the handling of reports of criminal violations by employees of the Agency or relating to its affairs. These guidelines should require that the criminal investigation and the decision whether to prosecute be made by the Department of Justice, after consideration of Agency views regarding the impact of prosecution on the national security. The Agency should be permitted to conduct such investigations as it requires to determine whether its operations have been jeopardized. The Agency should scrupulously avoid exercise of the prosecutorial function.

2. Internal Controls (Chapter 8)

Findings

The Director's duties in administering the intelligence community, handling relations with other components of the government, and passing on broad questions of policy leave him little time for day-to-day supervision of the Agency. Past studies have noted the need for the Director to delegate greater responsibility for the administration of the Agency to the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence.

In recent years, the position of Deputy Director has been occupied by a high-ranking military officer, with responsibilities for maintaining liaison with the Department of Defense, fostering the Agency's relationship with the military services, and providing top CIA management with necessary experience and skill in understanding particular intelligence requirements of the military. Generally speaking, the Deputy Directors of Central Intelligence have not been heavily engaged in administration of the Agency.

Each of the four directorates within the CIA—Operations, Intelligence, Administration, and Science and Technology—is headed by a deputy director who reports to the Director and Deputy Director of Central Intelligence. These four deputies, together with certain other top Agency officials such as the Comptroller, form the Agency Management Committee, which makes many of the administrative and management decisions affecting more than one directorate.

Outside the chain of command, the primary internal mechanism for keeping the Agency within bounds is the Inspector General. The size of this office was recently sharply reduced, and its previous practice of making regular reviews of various Agency departments was terminated. At the present time, the activities of the office are almost entirely concerned with coordinating Agency responses to the various investigating bodies, and with various types of employee grievances.

The Office of General Counsel has on occasion played an important role in preventing or terminating Agency activities in violation of law, but many of the questionable or unlawful activities discussed in this report were not brought to the attention of this office. A certain parochialism may have resulted from the fact that attorneys in the office have little or no legal experience outside the Agency. It is important that the Agency receive the best possible legal advice on the often difficult and unusual situations which confront it.

Conclusions

In the final analysis, the proper functioning of the Agency must depend in large part on the character of the Director of Central Intelligence.

The best assurance against misuse of the Agency lies in the appointment to that position of persons with the judgment, courage, and independence to resist improper pressure and importuning, whether from the White House, within the Agency or elsewhere.

Compartmentation within the Agency, although certainly appropriate for security reasons, has sometimes been carried to extremes which prevent proper supervision and control.

The Agency must rely on the discipline and integrity of the men and women it employs. Many of the activities we have found to be improper or unlawful were in fact questioned by lower-level employees. Bringing such situations to the attention of upper levels of management is one of the purposes of a system of internal controls.

Recommendation (7)

a. Persons appointed to the position of Director of Central Intelligence should be individuals of stature, independence, and integrity. In making this appointment, consideration should be given to individuals from outside the career service of the CIA, although promotion from within should not be barred. Experience in intelligence service is not necessarily a prerequisite for the position; management and administrative skills are at least as important as the technical expertise which can always be found in an able deputy.

b. Although the Director serves at the pleasure of the President, no Director should serve in that position for more than 10 years.

Recommendation (8)

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a. The Office of Deputy Director of Central Intelligence should be reconstituted to provide for two such deputies, in addition to the four heads of the Agency's directorates. One deputy would act as the administrative officer, freeing the Director from day-to-day management duties. The other deputy should be a military officer, serving the functions of fostering relations with the military and providing the Agency with technical expertise on military intelligence requirements.

b. The advice and consent of the Senate should be required for the appointment of each Deputy Director of Central Intelligence.

Recommendation (9)

a. The Inspector General should be upgraded to a status equivalent to that of the deputy directors in charge of the four directorates within the CIA.

b. The Office of Inspector General should be staffed by outstanding, experienced officers from both inside and outside the CIA, with ability to understand the various branches of the Agency.

c. The Inspector General's duties with respect to domestic CIA activities should include periodic reviews of all offices within the United States. He should examine each office for compliance with CIA authority and regulations as well as for the effectiveness of their programs in implementing policy objectives.

d. The Inspector General should investigate all reports from employees concerning possible violations of the CIA statute.

e. The Inspector General should be given complete access to all information in the CIA relevant to his reviews.

f. An effective Inspector General's office will require a larger staff, more frequent reviews, and highly qualified personnel.

g. Inspector General reports should be provided to the National Security Council and the recommended executive oversight body. The Inspector General should have the authority, when he deems it appropriate, after notifying the Director of Central Intelligence, to consult with the executive oversight body on any CIA activity (see Recommendation 5).

Recommendation (10)

a. The Director should review the composition and operation of the Office of General Counsel and the degree to which this office is consulted to determine whether the Agency is receiving adequate legal assistance and representation in view of current requirements.

b. Consideration should be given to measures which would strengthen the office's professional capabilities and resources including, among other things, (1) occasionally departing from the

existing practice of hiring lawyers from within the Agency to bring in seasoned lawyers from private practice as well as to hire law school graduates without prior CIA experience; (2) occasionally assigning Agency lawyers to serve a tour of duty elsewhere in the government to expand their experience; (3) encouraging lawyers to participate in outside professional activities.

Recommendation (11)

To a degree consistent with the need for security, the CIA should be encouraged to provide for increased lateral movement of personnel among the directorates and to bring persons with outside experience into the Agency at all levels.

Recommendation (12)

a. The Agency should issue detailed guidelines for its employees further specifying those activities within the United States which are permitted and those which are prohibited by statute, Executive Orders, and NSC and DCI directives.

b. These guidelines should also set forth the standards which govern CIA activities and the general types of activities which are permitted and prohibited. They should, among other things, specify that:

—Clandestine collection of intelligence directed against United States citizens is prohibited except as specifically permitted by law or published Executive Order.

—Unlawful methods or activities are prohibited.

—Prior approval of the DCI shall be required for any activities which may raise questions of compliance with the law or with Agency regulations.

c. The guidelines should also provide that employees with information on possibly improper activities are to bring it promptly to the attention of the Director of Central Intelligence or the Inspector General.

D. Significant Areas of Investigation

Introduction

Domestic activities of the CIA raising substantial questions of compliance with the law have been closely examined by the Commission to determine the context in which they were performed, the pressures of the times, the relationship of the activity to the Agency's foreign intelligence assignment and to other CIA activities, the procedures

used to authorize and conduct the activity, and the extent and effect on the activity.

In describing and assessing each such activity, it has been necessary to consider both that activity's relationship to the legitimate national security needs of the nation and the threat such activities might pose to individual rights of Americans and to a society founded on the need for government, as well as private citizens, to obey the law.

1. The CIA's Mail Intercepts (Chapter 9)

Findings

At the time the CIA came into being, one of the highest national intelligence priorities was to gain an understanding of the Soviet Union and its worldwide activities affecting our national security.

In this context, the CIA began in 1952 a program of surveying mail between the United States and the Soviet Union as it passed through a New York postal facility. In 1953 it began opening some of this mail. The program was expanded over the following two decades and ultimately involved the opening of many letters and the analysis of envelopes, or "covers," of a great many more letters.

The New York mail intercept was designed to attempt to identify persons within the United States who were cooperating with the Soviet Union and its intelligence forces to harm the United States. It was also intended to determine technical communications procedures and mail censorship techniques used by the Soviets.

The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency approved commencement of the New York mail intercept in 1952. During the ensuing years, so far as the record shows, Postmasters General Summerfield, Day, and Blount were informed of the program in varying degrees, as was Attorney General Mitchell. Since 1958, the FBI was aware of this program and received 57,000 items from it.

A 1962 CIA memorandum indicates the Agency was aware that the mail openings would be viewed as violating federal criminal laws prohibiting obstruction or delay of the mails.

In the last year before the termination of this program, out of 4,350,000 items of mail sent to and from the Soviet Union, the New York intercept examined the outside of 2,300,000 of these items, photographed 33,000 envelopes, and opened 8,700.

The mail intercept was terminated in 1973 when the Chief Postal Inspector refused to allow its continuation without an up-to-date high-level approval.

The CIA also ran much smaller mail intercepts for brief periods in San Francisco between 1969 and 1971 and in the territory of Hawaii

during 1954 and 1955. For a short period in 1957, mail in transit between foreign countries was intercepted in New Orleans.

Conclusions

While in operation, the CIA's domestic mail opening programs were unlawful. United States statutes specifically forbid opening the mail.

The mail openings also raise Constitutional questions under the Fourth Amendment guarantees against unreasonable search, and the scope of the New York project poses possible difficulties with the First Amendment rights of speech and press.

Mail cover operations (examining and copying of envelopes only) are legal when carried out in compliance with postal regulations on a limited and selective basis involving matters of national security. The New York mail intercept did not meet these criteria.

The nature and degree of assistance given by the CIA to the FBI in the New York mail project indicate that the CIA's primary purpose eventually became participation with the FBI in internal security functions. Accordingly, the CIA's participation was prohibited under the National Security Act.

Recommendation (13)

a. The President should instruct the Director of Central Intelligence that the CIA is not to engage again in domestic mail openings except with express statutory authority in time of war. (See also Recommendation 23.)

b. The President should instruct the Director of Central Intelligence that mail cover examinations are to be in compliance with postal regulations; they are to be undertaken only in furtherance of the CIA's legitimate activities and then only on a limited and selected basis clearly involving matters of national security.

2. Intelligence Community Coordination (Chapter 10)

Findings

As a result of growing domestic disorder, the Department of Justice, starting in 1967 at the direction of Attorney General Ramsey Clark, coordinated a series of secret units and interagency groups in an effort to collate and evaluate intelligence relating to these events. These efforts continued until 1973.

The interagency committees were designed for analytic and not

operational purposes. They were created as a result of White House pressure which began in 1967, because the FBI performed only limited evaluation and analysis of the information it collected on these events. The stated purpose of CIA's participation was to supply relevant foreign intelligence and to furnish advice on evaluation techniques.

The CIA was reluctant to become unduly involved in these committees, which had problems of domestic unrest as their principal focus. It repeatedly refused to assign full-time personnel to any of them.

The most active of the committees was the Intelligence Evaluation Staff, which met from January 1971 to May 1973. A CIA liaison officer⁴ attended over 100 weekly meetings of the Staff, some of which concerned drafts of reports which had no foreign aspects. With the exception of one instance, there is no evidence that he acted in any capacity other than as an adviser on foreign intelligence, and, to some degree, as an editor.

On one occasion the CIA liaison officer appears to have caused a CIA agent to gather domestic information which was reported to the Intelligence Evaluation Staff.

The Commission found no evidence of other activities by the CIA that were conducted on behalf of the Department of Justice groups except for the supplying of appropriate foreign intelligence and advice on evaluation techniques.

Conclusions

The statutory prohibition on internal security functions does not preclude the CIA from providing foreign intelligence or advice on evaluation techniques to interdepartmental intelligence evaluation organizations having some domestic aspects. The statute was intended to promote coordination, not compartmentation of intelligence between governmental departments.

The attendance of the CIA liaison officer at over 100 meetings of the Intelligence Evaluation Staff, some of them concerned wholly with domestic matters, nevertheless created at least the appearance of impropriety. The Director of Central Intelligence was well advised to approach such participation reluctantly.

The liaison officer acted improperly in the one instance in which he directed an agent to gather domestic information within the United States which was reported to the Intelligence Evaluation Staff.

⁴ The liaison officer was Chief of the CIA's Special Operations Group which ran Operation CHAOS, discussed in Chapter 11 of this Report.

Much of the problem stemmed from the absence in government of any organization capable of adequately analyzing intelligence collected by the FBI on matters outside the purview of CIA.

Recommendation (14)

a. A capability should be developed within the FBI, or elsewhere in the Department of Justice, to evaluate, analyze, and coordinate intelligence and counterintelligence collected by the FBI concerning espionage, terrorism, and other related matters of internal security.

b. The CIA should restrict its participation in any joint intelligence committees to foreign intelligence matters.

c. The FBI should be encouraged to continue to look to the CIA for such foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence as is relevant to FBI needs.

3. Special Operations Group—"Operation CHAOS" (Chapter 11)

Findings

The late 1960's and early 1970's were marked by widespread violence and civil disorders.⁵ Demonstrations, marches and protest assemblies were frequent in a number of cities. Many universities and college campuses became places of disruption and unrest. Government facilities were picketed and sometimes invaded. Threats of bombing and bombing incidents occurred frequently. In Washington and other major cities, special security measures had to be instituted to control the access to public buildings.

Responding to Presidential requests made in the face of growing domestic disorder, the Director of Central Intelligence in August 1967 established a Special Operations Group within the CIA to collect, coordinate, evaluate and report on the extent of foreign influence on domestic dissidence.

The Group's activities, which later came to be known as Operation CHAOS, led the CIA to collect information on dissident Americans from CIA field stations overseas and from the FBI.

Although the stated purpose of the Operation was to determine whether there were any foreign contacts with American dissident groups, it resulted in the accumulation of considerable material on domestic dissidents and their activities.

During six years, the Operation compiled some 13,000 different files, including files on 7,200 American citizens. The documents in these files and related materials included the names of more than 300,000 persons and organizations, which were entered into a computerized index.

This information was kept closely guarded within the CIA. Using this information, personnel of the Group prepared 3,500 memoranda for internal use; 3,000 memoranda for dissemination to the FBI; and 37 memoranda for distribution to White House and other top level officials in the government.

The staff assigned to the Operation was steadily enlarged in response to repeated Presidential requests for additional information, ultimately reaching a maximum of 52 in 1971. Because of excessive isolation, the Operation was substantially insulated from meaningful review within the Agency, including review by the Counterintelligence Staff—of which the Operation was technically a part.

Commencing in late 1969, Operation CHAOS used a number of agents to collect intelligence abroad on any foreign connections with American dissident groups. In order to have sufficient "cover" for these agents, the Operation recruited persons from domestic dissident groups or recruited others and instructed them to associate with such groups in this country.

Most of the Operation's recruits were not directed to collect information domestically on American dissidents. On a number of occasions, however, such information was reported by the recruits while they were developing dissident credentials in the United States, and the information was retained in the files of the Operation. On three occasions, an agent of the Operation was specifically directed to collect domestic intelligence.

No evidence was found that any Operation CHAOS agent used or was directed by the Agency to use electronic surveillance, wiretaps or break-ins in the United States against any dissident individual or group.

Activity of the Operation decreased substantially by mid-1972. The Operation was formally terminated in March 1974.

Conclusions

Some domestic activities of Operation CHAOS unlawfully exceeded the CIA's statutory authority, even though the declared mission of gathering intelligence abroad as to foreign influence on domestic dissident activities was proper.

Most significantly, the Operation became a repository for large quantities of information on the domestic activities of American citizens. This information was derived principally from FBI reports or from overt sources and not from clandestine collection by the CIA, and much of it was not directly related to the question of the existence of foreign connections.

It was probably necessary for the CIA to accumulate an information base on domestic dissident activities in order to assess fairly whether the activities had foreign connections. The FBI would collect information but would not evaluate it. But the accumulation of domestic data in the Operation exceeded what was reasonably required to make such an assessment and was thus improper.

The use of agents of the Operation on three occasions to gather information within the United States on strictly domestic matters was beyond the CIA's authority. In addition the intelligence disseminations and those portions of a major study prepared by the Agency which dealt with purely domestic matters were improper.

The isolation of Operation CHAOS within the CIA and its independence from supervision by the regular chain of command within the clandestine service made it possible for the activities of the Operation to stray over the bounds of the Agency's authority without the knowledge of senior officials. The absence of any regular review of these activities prevented timely correction of such missteps as did occur.

Recommendation (15)

- a. Presidents should refrain from directing the CIA to perform what are essentially internal security tasks.
- b. The CIA should resist any efforts, whatever their origin, to involve it again in such improper activities.
- c. The Agency should guard against allowing any component (like the Special Operations Group) to become so self-contained and isolated from top leadership that regular supervision and review are lost.
- d. The files of the CHAOS project which have no foreign intelligence value should be destroyed by the Agency at the conclusion of the current congressional investigations, or as soon thereafter as permitted by law.

4. Protection of the Agency Against Threats of Violence—Office of Security (Chapter 12)

Findings

The CIA was not immune from the threats of violence and disruption during the period of domestic unrest between 1967 and 1972. The Office of Security was charged throughout this period with the responsibility of ensuring the continued functioning of the CIA.

The Office therefore, from 1967 to 1970, had its field officers collect information from published materials, law enforcement authorities,

other agencies and college officials before recruiters were sent to some campuses. Monitoring and communications support was provided to recruiters when trouble was expected.

The Office was also responsible, with the approval of the Director of Central Intelligence, for a program from February 1967 to December 1968, which at first monitored, but later infiltrated, dissident organizations in the Washington, D.C., area to determine if the groups planned any activities against CIA or other government installations.

At no time were more than 12 persons performing these tasks, and they performed them on a part-time basis. The project was terminated when the Washington Metropolitan Police Department developed its own intelligence capability.

In December, 1967, the Office began a continuing study of dissident activity in the United States, using information from published and other voluntary knowledgeable sources. The Office produced weekly Situation Information Reports analyzing dissident activities and providing calendars of future events. Calendars were given to the Secret Service, but the CIA made no other disseminations outside the Agency. About 500 to 800 files were maintained on dissenting organizations and individuals. Thousands of names in the files were indexed. Report publication was ended in late 1972, and the entire project was ended in 1973.

Conclusions

The program under which the Office of Security rendered assistance to Agency recruiters on college campuses was justified as an exercise of the Agency's responsibility to protect its own personnel and operations. Such support activities were not undertaken for the purpose of protecting the facilities or operations of other governmental agencies, or to maintain public order or enforce laws.

The Agency should not infiltrate a dissident group for security purposes unless there is a clear danger to Agency installations, operations or personnel, and investigative coverage of the threat by the FBI and local law enforcement authorities is inadequate. The Agency's infiltration of dissident groups in the Washington area went far beyond steps necessary to protect the Agency's own facilities, personnel and operations, and therefore exceeded the CIA's statutory authority.

In addition, the Agency undertook to protect other government departments and agencies—a police function prohibited to it by statute.

Intelligence activity directed toward learning from what sources a domestic dissident group receives its financial support within the

United States, and how much income it has, is no part of the authorized security operations of the Agency. Neither is it the function of the Agency to compile records on who attends peaceful meetings of such dissident groups, or what each speaker has to say (unless it relates to disruptive or violent activity which may be directed against the Agency).

The Agency's actions in contributing funds, photographing people, activities and cars, and following people home were unreasonable under the circumstances and therefore exceeded the CIA's authority.

With certain exceptions, the program under which the Office of Security (without infiltration) gathered, organized and analyzed information about dissident groups for purposes of security was within the CIA's authority.

The accumulation of reference files on dissident organizations and their leaders was appropriate both to evaluate the risks posed to the Agency and to develop an understanding of dissident groups and their differences for security clearance purposes. But the accumulation of information on domestic activities went beyond what was required by the Agency's legitimate security needs and therefore exceeded the CIA's authority.

Recommendation (16)

The CIA should not infiltrate dissident groups or other organizations of Americans in the absence of a written determination by the Director of Central Intelligence that such action is necessary to meet a clear danger to Agency facilities, operations, or personnel and that adequate coverage by law enforcement agencies is unavailable.

Recommendation (17)

All files on individuals accumulated by the Office of Security in the program relating to dissidents should be identified, and, except where necessary for a legitimate foreign intelligence activity, be destroyed at the conclusion of the current congressional investigations, or as soon thereafter as permitted by law.

5. Other Investigations by the Office of Security (Chapter 13)

A. Security Clearance Investigations of Prospective Employees and Operatives

Findings and Conclusions

The Office of Security routinely conducts standard security investigations with the Agency. In doing so, the

Office is performing the necessary function of screening persons to whom it will make available classified information. Such investigations are necessary, and no improprieties were found in connection with them.

B. Investigations of Possible Breaches of Security

1. Persons Investigated

Findings

The Office of Security has been called upon on a number of occasions to investigate specific allegations that intelligence sources and methods were threatened by unauthorized disclosures. The Commission's inquiry concentrated on those investigations which used investigative means intruding on the privacy of the subjects, including physical and electronic surveillance, unauthorized entry, mail covers and intercepts, and reviews of individual federal tax returns.

The large majority of these investigations were directed at persons affiliated with the Agency—such as employees, former employees, and defectors and other foreign nationals used by the Agency as intelligence sources.

A few investigations involving intrusions on personal privacy were directed at subjects with no relationship to the Agency. The Commission has found no evidence that any such investigations were directed against any congressman, judge, or other public official. Five were directed against newsmen, in an effort to determine their sources of leaked classified information, and nine were directed against other United States citizens.

The CIA's investigations of newsmen to determine their sources of classified information stemmed from pressures from the White House and were partly a result of the FBI's unwillingness to undertake such investigations. The FBI refused to proceed without an advance opinion that the Justice Department would prosecute if a case were developed.

Conclusions

Investigations of allegations against Agency employees and operatives are a reasonable exercise of the Director's statutory duty to protect intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure if the investigations are lawfully conducted. Such investigations also assist the Director in the exercise of his unreviewable authority to terminate the employment of any Agency employee. They are proper unless

their principal purpose becomes law-enforcement or the maintenance of internal security.

The Director's responsibility to protect intelligence sources and methods is not so broad as to permit investigations of persons having no relationship whatever with the Agency. The CIA has no authority to investigate newsmen simply because they have published leaked classified information. Investigations by the CIA should be limited to persons presently or formerly affiliated with the Agency, directly or indirectly.

Recommendation (18)

a. The Director of Central Intelligence should issue clear guidelines setting forth the situations in which the CIA is justified in conducting its own investigation of individuals presently or formerly affiliated with it.

b. The guidelines should permit the CIA to conduct investigations of such persons only when the Director of Central Intelligence first determines that the investigation is necessary to protect intelligence sources and methods the disclosure of which might endanger the national security.

c. Such investigations must be coordinated with the FBI whenever substantial evidence suggesting espionage or violation of a federal criminal statute is discovered.

Recommendation (19)

a. In cases involving serious or continuing security violations, as determined by the Security Committee of the United States Intelligence Board, the Committee should be authorized to recommend in writing to the Director of Central Intelligence (with a copy to the National Security Council) that the case be referred to the FBI for further investigation, under procedures to be developed by the Attorney General.

b. These procedures should include a requirement that the FBI accept such referrals without regard to whether a favorable prospective opinion is issued by the Justice Department. The CIA should not engage in such further investigations.

Recommendation (20)

The CIA and other components and agencies of the intelligence community should conduct periodic reviews of all classified material originating within those departments or agencies, with a view to declassifying as much of that material as possible. The purpose of such review would be to assure the public that it has access to all information that should properly be disclosed.

Recommendation (21)

The Commission endorses legislation, drafted with appropriate

safeguards of the constitutional rights of all affected individuals, which would make it a criminal offense for employees or former employees of the CIA wilfully to divulge to any unauthorized person classified information pertaining to foreign intelligence or the collection thereof obtained during the course of their employment.

2. Investigative Techniques

Findings

Even an investigation within the CIA's authority must be conducted by lawful means. Some of the past investigations by the Office of Security within the United States were conducted by means which were invalid at the time. Others might have been lawful when conducted, but would be impermissible today.

Some investigations involved physical surveillance of the individuals concerned, possibly in conjunction with other methods of investigation. The last instance of physical surveillance by the Agency within the United States occurred in 1973.

The investigation disclosed the domestic use of 32 wiretaps, the last in 1965; 32 instances of bugging, the last in 1968; and 12 break-ins, the last in 1971. None of these activities was conducted under a judicial warrant, and only one with the written approval of the Attorney General.

Information from the income tax records of 16 persons was obtained from the Internal Revenue Service by the CIA in order to help determine whether the taxpayer was a security risk with possible connections to foreign groups. The CIA did not employ the existing statutory and regulatory procedures for obtaining such records from the IRS.

In 91 instances, mail covers (the photographing of the front and back of an envelope) were employed, and in 12 instances letters were intercepted and opened.

The state of the CIA records on these activities is such that it is often difficult to determine why the investigation occurred in the first place, who authorized the special coverage, and what the results were. Although there was testimony that these activities were frequently known to the Director of Central Intelligence and sometimes to the Attorney General, the files often are insufficient to confirm such information.

Conclusions

The use of physical surveillance is not unlawful unless it reaches the point of harassment. The unauthorized entries described were

illegal when conducted and would be illegal if conducted today. Likewise, the review of individuals' federal tax returns and the interception and opening of mail violated specific statutes and regulations prohibiting such conduct.

Since the constitutional and statutory constraints applicable to the use of electronic eavesdropping (bugs and wiretaps) have been evolving over the years, the Commission deems it impractical to apply those changing standards on a case-by-case basis. The Commission does believe that while some of the instances of electronic eavesdropping were proper when conducted, many were not. To be lawful today, such activities would require at least the written approval of the Attorney General on the basis of a finding that the national security is involved and that the case has significant foreign connections.

Recommendation (22)

The CIA should not undertake physical surveillance (defined as systematic observation) of Agency employees, contractors or related personnel within the United States without first obtaining written approval of the Director of Central Intelligence.

Recommendation (23)

In the United States and its possessions, the CIA should not intercept wire or oral communications⁶ or otherwise engage in activities that would require a warrant if conducted by a law enforcement agency. Responsibility for such activities belongs with the FBI.

Recommendation (24)

The CIA should strictly adhere to established legal procedures governing access to federal income tax information.

Recommendation (25)

CIA investigation records should show that each investigation was duly authorized, and by whom, and should clearly set forth the factual basis for undertaking the investigation and the results of the investigation.